

Ceremony marks start of federal duty for TF Normandy

More than 450 Soldiers from the Virginia National Guard's Winchester-based 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team marked the start of their federal active service at a departure ceremony Sept. 9, 2015, at Fort A. P. Hill, Va. The battalion, also known as Task Force Normandy, is made up of units from around the state, and they are scheduled to deploy to Qatar where they are expected to conduct security missions in support of contingency operations in the region.

Lt. Col. Kurt K. Kobernik, commander of Task Force Normandy, and Command Sgt. Maj. Alvin N. Martin, the battalion command sergeant major, cased the unit's organizational colors to signify the unit's departure from Virginia, and the colors will be uncased when they begin their mission in Qatar.

"Task Force Normandy stands in front of you due in large part to the strong sense of duty of our Soldiers and their families," Kobernik said.



Lt. Col. Kurt K. Kobernik and Command Sgt. Maj. Alvin N. Martin case the Task Force Normandy colors to signify their departure from Virginia Sept. 9, 2015, at Fort A. P. Hill, Va.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2015/09/15/8027/>

Virginia National Guard News Headlines

Gallagher takes command of 329th Regional Support Group

Lt. Col. K. Weedon Gallagher took command of the Virginia Beach-based 329th Regional Support Group from Col. Michelle M. Rose at a change of command ceremony held Sept. 13, 2015, at Camp Pendleton in Virginia Beach. Va. Brig. Gen. Walter L. Mercer presided over the exchange of unit colors.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2015/09/17/8048/>

Family Programs receives accreditation for services, assistance, support

Virginia National Guard Family Programs received notification on Aug. 15, 2015, that it was officially accredited by the Council on Accreditation, becoming one of only 11 National Guard Family Programs offices in the nation to receive that honor.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2015/09/22/8037/>

ESGR Boss Lift introduces civilian, state leaders to Va. Guard, Fort Pickett

Civilian business leaders and representatives of several Virginia state agencies participated in an Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve Boss Lift, Sept. 9, 2015, at Fort Pickett, Va., to see first-hand what their employees do in their military careers.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2015/09/17/8017/>

Camp Pendleton hosts 3-day GIS training for Va. Guard

Nearly a dozen Virginia Guard Soldiers and civilians traveled to Virginia Beach for a three-day Geospatial Information System training course Sept. 15-17, 2015. GIS can be used by the Virginia Guard for a variety of purposes, including emergency operations, range and training safety, and environmental compliance.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2015/09/23/8059/>

Mark Your Calendars!

Oct. 4-6: Mission: Healthy Family Retreat

There are still spots available for the Mission: Healthy Family Retreat for all National Guard Soldiers and Airmen and their families. The retreat will take place at the Airfield 4H Conference Center at 15189 Airfield Road in Wakefield, Va.

Check in will be from 4-6 p.m. on Friday and check out will be noon on Sunday.

The registration fee is \$25 per family.

For more information contact Kerri Gerke, family resource specialist at (804) 862-8002 extension 3035 or by email at Gerkek@RBHA.org.

Va. Guard encouraging “buddy checks” Sept. 30

The Virginia National Guard is encouraging its members to check in on their battle buddies and wingmen Sept. 30, 2015, to make sure they are doing well and help them find resources if they are experiencing hardship or in crisis. As part of the initiative, Soldiers and Airmen should call, text or make plans to get together to catch up on what's going on each other's lives. They can also show their support by posting on social media with the #VaGuardBuddyCheck hashtag.

“We all face demands in our personal and military lives, and we have to look out for each other to make sure we are handling those stresses,” said Maj. Gen. Timothy P. Williams, the Adjutant General of Virginia. “We have a host of resources available to anyone in need, but we have to make sure we identify anyone who needs them and get them pointed in the right direction. Leaders at every level must create a climate where our Soldiers and Airmen know it is okay to reach out and ask for help if they need it.”

A full list of resources is available at the Virginia Army National Guard's Resilience, Risk Reduction and Suicide Prevention Program, also known as R3SP, web page at <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/r3sp/>.

The Virginia National Guard has Family Assistance Centers located throughout the state that are considered one-stop assistance for those who need services and support. Through partnerships with agencies such as Veterans of Foreign Wars, The American Legion, the Red Cross and other local and national organizations and working closely with military personnel such as chaplains, commanders, JAG Officers and volunteers, the Family Assistance Center Specialists are able to provide the very best assistance possible.

Some of the areas in which a FAC staff can provide assistance includes but is not limited to TRICARE, DEERS, ID Cards, financial and legal assistance, community outreach/referral and crisis intervention and referral.

For more information about Family Assistance Centers, visit <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/fac/> or call the 24-hour Hotline at 1-800-542-4028.



Virginia Guard Soldiers and Airmen are encouraged to check in on their battle buddies and wingmen Sept. 30, 2015, to make sure they doing well and help them find resources if they are experiencing hardship or in crisis.

Key Elements of Va. Guard “Buddy Check” Day

- **Virginia National Guard Soldiers and Airmen are encouraged to call, text or make plans to get together with their buddy or wingman to check and see how they are doing.**
- **Make sure your buddy or wingman isn't experiencing hardship or crisis related to issues like financial problems, relationship conflict, substance abuse or stress related to deployment or combat duty.**
- **Help your buddy or wingman find resources that will help them deal with their hardship or crisis.**
- **Be sure to take them seriously and create a climate where they know it is okay to ask for help.**

If you feel like your buddy or wingman expresses feelings of suicide, call the Suicide Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255) and press 1 to get specialized assistance for members of the military.

“The number one way to notice risk factors, warning signs, and changes in behavior associated with suicide is to know your buddy or wingman,” said Cheyenne Facchina, Virginia National Guard suicide prevention program manager. “They could be at risk because of relationship problems, financial issues or substance abuse, not only because of stresses related to combat duty or deployment.”

It is also important to take seriously any of the warnings signs and get help immediately, she said.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2015/09/22/8030/>

MORE ON THE WEB

Resilience, Risk Reduction and Suicide Prevention

<http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/r3sp/>

Virginia National Guard Family Assistance Centers

<http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/fac/>

Virginia National Guard Suicide Prevention Resources

<http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/suicideprevention/>

Guard Your Health

<http://www.guardyourhealth.com>

U. S. Army Read and Resilient

<http://www.army.mil/readyandresilient>

Air Combat Command Comprehensive Airman Fitness

<http://www.acc.af.mil/comprehensiveairmanfitness/index.asp>



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